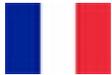




Diversity in Europe

■ *In varietate Concordia (CE Bruxelles, 2000)*



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*« These strangers in a foreign World
Protection asked of me-
Befriend them, lest yourself in Heaven
Be found a refugee »*

*« Ces Etrangères, en Monde inconnu
Asile m'ont demandé
Accueille-les, car Toi- même au Ciel
Pourrait être une Réfugiée »*

Emily Dickinson (Quatrains II-2, 1864-65, Amherst, Massachusetts, Etats-Unis)
traduction en français de Claire Malroux (NRF, Poésie/Gallimard, Paris, 2000)

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Diversity in the French speaking World – Francophonie

The Institute for Research and Information on Volunteering (Iriv) has published since September 2016 a newsletter dedicated to migration- *Regards Croisés sur la Migration*.

The first issues (September 2016 - March 2018) were dedicated to a comparison between Paris and Berlin based on testimonies gathered among migrants interviewed in the two European capital cities. Since 2018, our newsletter has been entitled “Diversity in Europe”. Its main aim is now to tackle the issue of diversity- the motto chosen by the European Union (EU) since 2000 and in 2004 after the last biggest enlargement of the European Union (from 15 to 25 EU members).

The first issue (November 2018) was focussed on diversity at school with Rotterdam (in the Netherlands) whose inhabitants coming from abroad represent more than 70 % of the total population which is both a challenge and an opportunity to experience new approaches. Paris also has in its schools very diverse students in its classrooms.

The second issue (March 2019) was dedicated to religious & cultural diversity, with a focus on the Jewish community. If the Judaeo-Christian roots of the European Union are obvious, the European Union is a secular project with a genuine cultural identity open to all religions- “*United in diversity*”. This issue suggested a comparison between Paris and Thessaloniki, two cities sharing an history of troubled times during World War II.

The third issue (November 2019) tackled the issue of interreligious dialogue with articles on diversity in Switzerland and France. This is especially important in secular countries where all religions have to be respected together with the right to be free from any religious belonging or belief. A “republican” approach has allowed a civil peace for the past century in most of our European societies (but during World War II).

The fourth issue (March 2020) was focused on Education and Interfaith dialogue among multicultural countries. A first article analysed diversity inclusion in the USA, insisting on the necessity to enhance a “glocal diversity mindset”. A second article reminded of the example of Sarajevo, a city of peaceful existence between Jews, Muslims, Orthodox Serbs and Catholic Croats in a European country, Bosnia, with a historical “multifaceted, universal identity” that was brutally treated during the bloody Balkan war (1992-1995).

The 5th issue tackled the issue of diversity in the Mediterranean region with two articles dealing with diverse strategies. The first article was dedicated to diversity in the Eastern part of the Mediterranean, as a crossroad of Europe, Middle East, Africa, and Asia – a contradictory combination of economic and political interests in favour of an expense of solidarity and at the same time a total inefficiency of the European Union which raises mixed feelings. The second article was focused on the diverse strategies conducted by main actors in the Middle East with the necessity for the European Union to support its first and foremost allies in the region.

This sixth issue deals with artistic diversity and intercultural education. The first article presents the diversity in Mexico with the great wealth of craftsmanship which is very unique according to the communities. The second article addresses the necessary intercultural dialogue and education which is essential in modern societies with the example of music as a universal language..

The seventh issue illustrates diversity in the French speaking world- Francophonie. The first article explains that diversity has been at the heart of the Francophonie from the start and that all French speaking people have it at heart. The second article evokes the diverse facets of the French speaking World, from its writers, in Guyana, Martinique, Senegal and Mali with the tutelary figures of Léopold Sédar Senghor and Aimé Césaire

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French Speaking World (Francophonie), diversity at heart and at the heart

Conceived as the character of that which is diverse, varied, diversity is the constitutive mark of the French speaking World with both a lowercase "f" and a capital "F". With a capital letter it designates the institutional device organizing relations between French-speaking countries. With a lowercase " f ", it refers to all French speakers around the world. Diversity is at the heart of these two entities which have its promotion, cultural and linguistic, at heart.

At the heart of the French speaking plan, cultural and linguistic diversity - " Francophonie is an African idea enriched by French history," argued the former Mauritian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jean-Claude de Estrac. Indeed, its foundation is the French language, which millions of Africans have found in "the rubble of the colonial regime", to use the phrase of Léopold Sédar Senghor. By choosing to make this language their "spoils of war", in the words of the Algerian writer Kateb Yacine, the four founding fathers of Francophonie who were the then Senegalese president, Léopold Sédar Senghor and his counterparts Hamani Diori from Niger, Habib Bourguiba from Tunisia and Prince Norodom Sihanouk from Cambodia have decided to set up an organization under the sign of diversity. The convention establishing the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation (ACCT), signed on March 20, 1970 in Niamey (Niger) set the tone, assigning the young organization the mission of promoting and defending cultural diversity and linguistic.

When the ACCT became the International Organization of French Speaking World-Francophonie (OIF) in 2005, the need to assert this dual-attribute diversity was accentuated under the pressure of standardizing globalization, confirming the visionary nature of the intuition of the founding fathers. Thus, the Charter of Francophonie, adopted in Antananarivo (Madagascar), indicates that the Organization's objectives, among others, are: "to intensify the dialogue between cultures and civilizations; the bringing together of peoples through their mutual knowledge ". With this precision that "Francophonie respects the sovereignty of States, their languages and their cultures" (1). These objectives are driven by a desire to work for the influence of the French language, the dialogue of cultures and the culture of dialogue

This respect for the great diversity of its members is reflected at all levels. With its 300 million speakers worldwide (2), the institutional Francophonie brings together 88 states and various governments. Countries of the North rub shoulders with countries of the South. Rich countries sit side by side with developing countries. States whose official language is French work within the OIF with States which formalize other languages. All are united by their attachment to French. This language is enriched by the diversity of the peoples who speak it. The French of Côte d'Ivoire is not that of Madagascar. The French of Cameroon is not that of Haiti. The French of Canada is sometimes different from that of Belgium.

"We all speak several French," concluded Barbara Cassin of the Académie française (3). When we consider the mother tongues of peoples belonging to the French-speaking world, we see that the French-speaking community is, in reality, "a veritable linguistic mosaic" (4) which shares the use of French. Likewise, French-speaking culture is conjugated in the plural (5). It is expressed in all fields of creation

The action of French speaking world has diversity at heart - In the context of standardizing globalization, the institutional Francophonie, which represents this geo-cultural space, is called upon to respond to the geo-economic and geopolitical challenges of this globalization which accelerates the bringing together of peoples and cultures (6). Francophonie is therefore committed to cultural and linguistic diversity as one of the responses to this phenomenon. It works for the construction of political and legal bases at the global level (7). Thus, after having defended the principle of cultural exception during the negotiations of the GATT and those of the draft European Constitution, it supported the adoption in October 2005, by UNESCO, of the Convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions, which has now become a reference text. This treaty recognizes the dual identity and economic dimension of cultural goods and services and the legitimacy of public policies regulating culture. Active support for cultural diversity was also expressed during the 4th ministerial conference on culture through the Abidjan Declaration of July 2017, accompanied by an action plan in favor of cultural and creative industries in the digital era.

The OIF also promotes and defends cultural diversity through several cooperation actions. We can cite the prizes it awards each year, the medals it awards during the games it organizes, the films and documentaries supported by the Image Fund, the support for the implementation of public policies for cultural development and assistance to French-speaking media. It also promotes bi or plurilingualism in countries with several languages and defends multilingualism in international organizations. Not to mention the many cooperation projects in the fields of human rights and democracy, education and technical and vocational training and sustainable development. The entire French speaking plan is irrigated by the powerful flow of diversity.

Emmanuel Adjovi, représentant régional de l'OIF pour la REPCAL

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Diversity in the French speaking world, creolity and the promess of a new humanism

The 2021 Goncourt Prize was awarded to the Senegalese writer Mohamed Mbougar Sarr for his book “« La Plus Secrète Mémoire des hommes »” (1) a story “Traveled by multiple voices, crossing eras, spanning borders, the novel takes us from Paris in Amsterdam, from Dakar to Buenos Aires, from the end of the 19th century to our contemporary world, including the terrible hours of the Shoah ”(2). The book was inspired by the life of Yambo Ouologuem (3), a Malian writer, born in French Sudan, author of a single novel published in 1968, “Le Devoir de violence” which won the Renaudot prize in 1968, first African writer to receive this distinction, before its author is accused of plagiarism. The same mishap had happened in 1921 to René Maran, the first Guyanese writer to have received the Goncourt (4) prize for his book “Batouala” (5).

The lives of the two men have a lot of similarities. They both followed brilliant careers: studies in the best French high schools (Lycée Michel de Montaigne in Bordeaux for Maran, Lycée Henri IV in Paris for Ouologuem), an executive in the colonial administration for the Guyanese writer and a doctorate in sociology at the Ecole normale supérieure for its Malian counterpart. It is not the literary quality of their books that is violently attacked but the message, romanticized but very argued historically and based on their personal experience: a severe criticism of the French colonial empire, its dark side that France has long hidden, preferring to mythologize its links with Africa. Ouologuem makes his case worse, adding fierce criticism of the violence and duplicity of African leaders.

The French "colonial narrative" was as much political as it was economic, before (times of Maran) or after (times of Ouologuem) the independence of African states. France wished to continue to maintain privileged relations, always very interested, with the African continent. In his speech against colonialism, delivered in 1955, which announced the great independence movement of Asian and African countries, initiated in France with the wars in Indochina or Algeria in the 1950s, Martinican writer Aimé Césaire developed a similar critique of colonization from the French and European colonial past in Africa, Asia and Central America (6). The first effect of colonization is to dehumanize both the colonized peoples and the colonizers themselves. The unequal relations that develop between colonizers and colonized are necessarily brutal, cruel, based on the law of the strongest. The process at work in colonization is to objectify and impoverish colonized civilizations of their meaning and substance. The primary goal is the exploitation and appropriation of the wealth and human resources of the colonized countries by destroying the original economies. A necessary and insidious corollary of colonization is the collaboration it involves with indigenous local elites. Colonization also strives to standardize populations.

This rejection of diversity is the very characteristic of all totalitarianism, as Hannah Arendt reminds us, for whom imperialism has entered the world stage in Africa (7). In her book *American*

philosopher deals with strictly European colonial imperialism "which ended with the liquidation of British rule in India". This is "the story of the disintegration of the nation state". The imperialist era created a "world politics" with the "totalitarian claim to domination of the earth". Foreign affairs have become "planetary affairs" with the sole vocation of imposing a "Pax Romana on the rest of the world" without inventing new rules with its "pettiness" and "political myopia" which led to the catastrophe of totalitarianism. and the world wars of the twentieth century with a human tragedy unique in the history of humanity, the Shoah.

The French speaking World is part of a diametrically opposed logic. Léopold Sédar Senghor calls from 1962 for a “Francophonie without borders” which is “this integral Humanism, which is woven around the earth, this symbiosis of “dormant energies” of all the continents, of all the races, which are awakening to their complementary heat”. This universal message is cultural and political. French is spoken on five continents with 300 million French speakers, 88 member countries of the OIF, or 1 billion people in 2021. French does not only belong to France. It is a shared heritage enriched by the diversity of French-speaking countries.

Edouard Glissant, writer from Martinique, suggests the concept of creolization: "the world is creolizing, it means that the cultures of the world brought into contact in a lightning way and absolutely conscious today with each other are changing into exchanging”. (7). Raphaël Confiant prefers the praise for “Creolity” because Creole globalization must promote diversity, that is to say the mixture, the sharing of ancestors and identities, the non-compartmentalization of imaginaries (10) .

In his tragedy "And the dogs were silent", Aimé Césaire writes:

The rebel, harsh: “My name: offended; my first name: humiliated; my state: rebellious; my age: the stone age

The Mother: “My race: the human race. My religion:... brotherhood. (11)

A more peaceful and diplomatic Senghor sent this hopeful message in 1962 to Niamey (12): "The creation of a French-speaking community will perhaps be the first of its kind in modern history. It expresses the need of our time when man, threatened by the scientific progress of which he is the author, wants to build a new humanism which is, at the same time, in his own measure and that of the cosmos. "

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